

**BENEDICTION
AND THE
BISHOPS**

A. H. BAVERSTOCK M.A.



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Benediction and the bishops

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BY

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A. H. BAVERSTOCK, M.A.
RECTOR OF HINTON MARTEL, WIMBORNE

"It is most true that the Divine Majesty is present in all things."—ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA.

"The manner of meditation which sees God in everything is more easy than that other which elevates the mind to divine objects."—ID.

"After Mass he meditated by himself for two hours, his favourite practice being to kneel by a small window in his room whence he could see the tabernacle of Santa Maria della Strada; and at these times his face was seen to be irradiated."—FRANCIS THOMPSON'S "LIFE OF ST. IGNATIUS."

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book has been rapidly written, after some consultation with others who share the attitude of its author towards the subject, and from materials gradually accumulated during several years of study, with a sense of urgency. The Catholic clergy in the Church of England are face to face with a claim increasingly put forward by their bishops, whom they desire to obey in all things lawful, to forbid Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction. The fact that not a few priests have felt it right to admit this claim and to surrender, sorrowfully and under protest, practices which they had adopted for the honour of our Lord and the good of souls, makes it the more important for those who cannot in reason and conscience consent to such surrender to state clearly and unequivocally the grounds on which they base their refusal.

Without anticipating at all fully the statement of their case in the following pages, it may be briefly said that the real question at issue in the controversy between these priests and their bishops is not so much the rights of the episcopate as the duty of priests and bishops alike to promote the adoration of our Lord and God Jesus Christ, truly present in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. This has been the root matter of almost all the controversies in the Church since Bennett of Frome was prosecuted for teaching the Real Presence, although at every stage attempts have been made to obscure the real issue. If we are told that it is contrary to all Catholic practice for a priest to refuse obedience to his bishop in a matter which throughout the Church admittedly rests with the Bishop, namely, the regulation of services and ceremonies, we can only retort that for the bishops of two provinces of the Church to set themselves for successive generations in opposition to the piety which seeks the honour of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is unprecedented in the history of Catholic

Christendom, and that where bishops set themselves to defeat objects the importance of which has been recognized from the earliest days of the Church, unquestioning obedience becomes a disaster and disobedience often a duty. We have to choose, as Pusey and our fathers in the Catholic Movement chose, between the Church and the bishops. We dare not conform to the wishes of the latter at the expense of the ends of the former. Had such conditions obtained at any past age of the Church, in any part of the Church, it would have been, we conceive, the undoubted duty of Catholic priests and the Catholic laity to resist the policy, and even the express commands, of their spiritual rulers.

I desire to express my indebtedness to Mr. D. L. Murray, who has been at much pains to verify for me the references to the Fathers and liturgies : also to Mr. Laurence Hodson for valuable criticisms and suggestions.

A. H. BAVERSTOCK.

BENEDICTION AND THE BISHOPS

CHAPTER I

THE MATTER OF THE CONTROVERSY

It does not fall within the scope of this small work to give anything like a historical account of Benediction. Those who are interested in the subject may be referred to Fr. Thurston's learned articles in *The Month*,* and to his forthcoming book. Nor is it necessary for our purpose to trace at all fully the growth of this devotion since it was first started, more than half a century ago, within the Church of England.

It will be enough to point out briefly that the increasing lay demand for both Exposition and Benediction has resulted from the Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament for the

* June, July, August and September, 1901, and September, 1918.

communion of the faithful in sickness and other emergencies. Before the war there had been for some years a steady increase in the number of churches in which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved. In many of these the practice had gone on for a considerable number of years. Many of the faithful have thus grown up under the formative influence of the Blessed Sacrament continually present in the churches where they worshipped. Living, as it were, with the Blessed Sacrament, and believing, as Catholic Christians, that under its outward forms they had with them the adorable Saviour Himself, they demanded first access to the Sacrament for private devotion, and, later, the corporate and public expression of devotion in forms common throughout western Christendom. The war increased the number of churches in which there was Reservation. Partly, perhaps, because it brought death so near in the thoughts of all, apart from actual danger from sea or air. Partly again because of the sacrifice of leisure entailed upon many frequent communicants who could often only

make their communions from the tabernacle outside the Mass. And certainly the war led to an increased demand for access and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. If it did not bring about the widespread religious revival which was hoped for, at any rate it drove many to more frequent intercession. There were those who had long known the help of the Presence in the tabernacle to intercession ; and made fuller proof of it. Others, who had only realised it dimly or not at all, discovered it. The pressure of anxieties, public and private, and the increase of opportunities of access to the Blessed Sacrament led inevitably to the demand for something in the nature of Exposition and Benediction, and to the practices by which the demand was met. Even the Bishop of London, living outside the circle in which these influences were most felt, was forced to admit that he could no longer resist the demand for access. The clergy inside the circle knew, what others who objected even to access suspected, that the demand could not stop there ; that whole congregations would demand some corporate

expression of their devotion to the Blessed Sacrament reserved in their midst.

While circumstances at home made for such a demand, other circumstances served to intensify it. For many who had learned devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and some who had not, found opportunities in France and Belgium of joining in the eucharistic devotions of these Catholic countries. Before the war it was a comparatively rare thing for laymen of the English Church to attend Roman Catholic services. In France and Belgium they constantly went to Benediction, and found it to exercise the same attraction for them as for the faithful in those countries. Many of them (alas, not all) have returned to swell the demand for Benediction at home.

Benediction and the other practices connected with it are the fruits of a demand. We may thankfully welcome the demand as an evidence of increased faith and piety. And we are bound to challenge opposition to the demand, lest it come from something less worthy. The necessity of this challenge brings with it the necessity, as a matter of

primary importance, of some definition of terms. We need to ask, what exactly is Benediction? What is essential in it, and what accidental? There is the more need to ask such questions since there has been in some quarters a tendency to rule it out as an "extra service" and, therefore, subject to episcopal prohibition on the ground of the declaration made by the clergy that "in public prayer and the administration of the sacraments" they will use no other forms than those provided in the Book of Common Prayer, except so far as authority shall allow. We may note in passing that the authority referred to is probably not that of an individual bishop, and again that it is quite a reasonable supposition that "public prayer" means the same as "Common Prayer," and refers only to the Offices for which, with the administration of the Sacraments and certain other rites, the Prayer Book provides. What it is really essential, however, to point out is that neither Exposition nor Benediction necessarily entail any special service at all. Exposition is simply the ceremony of exposing

the Blessed Sacrament, unveiled, or even in the pyx, for the veneration of the faithful. Benediction is the ceremony of making the sign of the cross over the people with the Blessed Sacrament, whether held by the priest, exhibited in the monstrance, or enclosed in the pyx, and nothing more. It is of some importance in view of present controversies to insist on this. Fr. Thurston, commenting on the devotions generally connected with Benediction, writes :—" The word *salut*, which is still in French-speaking countries the name most commonly employed to designate the service of Benediction, preserves the memory of an institution which most probably must be regarded as the primitive stock, upon which the Exposition of the Sacred Host and the blessing imparted with It are only an excrescence." * Fr. Passmore once wittily suggested that the Anglican equivalent for Vespers and Benediction was " Evensong and Eleemosynary." It would be quite possible to have Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament at the end of

* *The Month*, September, 1901.

Evening Prayer, very much as many have the presentation of the alms, a ceremony which has only the sanction of popular custom, being nowhere prescribed. Exposition and Benediction could as easily be grafted on to the Prayer Book Litany as on to the original *Salut*.

And this leads to a point not altogether unimportant with regard to the history and justification of Benediction. Both Exposition and Benediction originate in the Mass itself. I must confess to some surprise that this has not been emphasised by Fr. Thurston in his learned disquisitions on the origins of these ceremonies. The elevation at Mass is an Exposition, and is made for the same purposes as Exposition at other times, to elicit the devotion of the faithful. The sign of the cross made by the celebrant with the Sacred Host before communion over himself and over each communicant in turn is Benediction, and carries all the implications of Benediction given outside the Mass. I have not been able to discover when this blessing with the Host in the Mass first appeared.

It would certainly seem to be ancient. Its idea is to be found in the practice, noted and approved by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, by which the people, on receiving the Sacrament, touched their eyes with it. And Exposition in the Mass is certainly earlier than the mediaeval Elevation at consecration. As I shall show, it received some emphasis in early liturgies when the priest turned to the people with the Blessed Sacrament in his hands.

Both Exposition and Benediction have their origin in the Liturgy itself. In their present customary form they have developed naturally and inevitably from their use in the Liturgy. Communicating the sick with the Sacred Host, the priest would naturally show it to the sick man and bless him with it, before giving it to him. When he returned to the Church with the Blessed Sacrament, accompanied by those whose piety had led them to go with him on his errand, it was only a natural extension of principles already recognized that he should bless them with the pyx before replacing it in the tabernacle.

The custom of performing the same ceremony at other times involved no startling departure. Solemn Benediction, with the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the monstrance, an "ornament," be it noted, required by the Ornaments Rubric to be "retained and be in use" among us, is merely a glorification of the older and simpler form of the ceremony.

The Roman Church has regulated this ceremony, as she has so many others, by a mass of authoritative prescriptions. The Exposition and Benediction which occur in the Mass may not be omitted. Lesser Exposition and Benediction, *i.e.* with the Blessed Sacrament remaining in the pyx, are allowed at any time. Solemn Exposition and Benediction, with the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance, are allowed on Corpus Christi, and in the octave; at other times the permission of the bishop is required.

In the English Church there are no written prescriptions, unless we except the Ornaments Rubric, as requiring the use of the monstrance. Neither in the Mass nor outside it is the priest required to expose the

Blessed Sacrament for the devotion of the people, or to bless them with it. Neither in the Mass nor outside it is he forbidden to do so.

It would be in some ways a gain if the English Church would adopt the regulations of the rest of Western Christendom in this matter. She is not likely to do so at present, for these regulations rest on a uniform belief in the Blessed Sacrament and the importance of devotion to it. And our bishops, most unfortunately, can only be uniform in condemnation. Nor is this uniformity lasting. It yields to the pressure of faith and devotion, so that what is condemned in one decade is tacitly sanctioned, if not openly approved, in the next. Thus it is that first reservation, then access, then public devotions before the tabernacle, have won episcopal toleration after being frowned upon and prohibited. There is little room for doubt that Exposition and Benediction will win a like toleration as it comes to be realized that Catholics demand these expressions of their faith and devotion. It is this conviction that makes controversy worth while.

CHAPTER II

THE REAL ISSUE

THE real issue at stake in the present controversy is the honour due to our Lord truly present in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. We hold, as the constant teaching of the Catholic Church, that the Blessed Sacrament is Jesus Christ Himself, and, therefore, to be adored with the supreme homage due to God. This is the truth which Exposition and Benediction express. It is true that these rites, apart from the Mass, are of comparatively late introduction in the Western Church. But the principles which they involve are primitive and universal. To surrender Exposition and Benediction, practised solely in honour of that Presence Which has been too often and terribly denied, insulted and profaned, would be inevitably to compromise these principles, by the mercy of God slowly gaining acceptance among

English Christians. This demand is, in some cases avowedly and in all cases ultimately, based upon the prevalent disbelief in the Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament. Were this doctrine as firmly and universally held among us as in the rest of Catholic Christendom, it is safe to say that there would be no demand to cease from these practices, which so unmistakably attest it. For every kind of religious experiment which involved no disputed doctrine has found a ready toleration from English bishops. Without mentioning such vagaries as egg-services, doll-services, and the like, we may point out that the late Jesuit devotion of the Three Hours, despite its novelty, its origin and its admitted lack of sanction from our formularies, is nowhere forbidden. The reason is plain. It involves no doctrine which is called in question among us. Is it not clear as daylight that Exposition and Benediction are forbidden precisely because they do involve a doctrinal basis which is called in question and that by surrendering them we do in fact compromise that basis? This, at any rate,

is our conviction. And for this reason we feel bound to refuse the surrender, at whatever cost to ourselves.

There is no sort of parallel here between the position of a bishop of the English Church who forbids Benediction throughout his diocese and that of a Roman Catholic bishop who may occasionally, for specific reasons, refuse to sanction it in individual cases. For the Roman Catholic bishop is avowedly guided in his decision solely by the desire to promote the honour of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Were the least doubt possible as to this desire on his part, there is an appeal beyond him to a spiritual authority pledged to the doctrinal basis on which these practices rest. In our case, no such right of appeal is recognized.

Nor can the admitted fact that the Eastern Orthodox Churches know nothing of these rites as practised in the West * be used as an

* A form of Benediction, as seen in Russia and described to me by an eyewitness, may be noted. After the communion of newly-baptized infants (from the chalice) the mothers knelt while the priest went from one to another, and laid the chalice containing the Precious Blood lightly on the head of each in turn.

argument for their surrender on our part. In these Churches there is no question of a bishop forbidding Benediction. The matter has never come before them. Even were it otherwise, there could be no doubt of the bishop recognizing the adorability of the Blessed Sacrament. Catholic Christendom, East and West, is agreed in the doctrinal basis on which Exposition and Benediction rest. It is only among ourselves that this basis is questioned. Precisely for this reason it is vital that we cling to the practices which express it, lest we seem to acquiesce in the prevalent disbelief. For the ready toleration of unbelief is the supreme danger which menaces the English Church. The authority of our bishops is a spiritual authority, given to them for the maintenance of Catholic truth and the promotion of Catholic devotion. We cannot set that authority above the ends for which alone it exists. However readily we grant, as we do grant and have been foremost in teaching, that the bishops are *jure divino* the spiritual rulers of the Church, we are forced to question their authority when

it is used to check a devotion which we hold them bound, like ourselves, to promote by every means in their power.

When this has been said, all that is necessary to justify the refusal to surrender Exposition and Benediction has been said. This refusal is the latest of a long line of refusals based in the last resort on the same doctrinal grounds. In every case alike it has been sought to raise other issues and to avoid that of doctrine. The same attempt is made in this case. But it will not stand. History will see in this controversy, as the ordinary Englishman sees now, only one more phase in the battle between opposing views of the Blessed Sacrament, a battle in which, alas, the bishops have been, with a few honourable exceptions, on one side, the priests who have led the Catholic revival on the other.

But it seems well further to fortify the position we are defending by a more explicit appeal to the teaching of the Church, which has been, we believe, mischievously misrepresented, and by a fuller examination of the claim made by a bishop who has won the

affection and respect of Catholics, to demand the surrender of Exposition and Benediction on grounds of canonical obedience. These subjects must be separately treated in the chapters which follow.

CHAPTER III

THE DOCTRINAL BASIS

EXPOSITION and Benediction are held by a great number, probably the majority, of our bishops to be things wrong in themselves. This is one of the principal reasons why we, who believe them to be right, must feel ourselves bound to cling to them, lest we compromise the truth.* We may pass over the position of those bishops who absolutely deny the Real Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and in consequence His right to any adoration therein, as one which does not and cannot claim any Catholic sanction or primitive endorsement. Incidentally, we may claim at least one such

* We are well aware that there are bishops of these provinces who do not so condemn them, and it is argued that in this case a bishop may claim an obedience which we should otherwise be justified in refusing. We cannot endorse this position. It does not seem to us reasonable that we should be expected to accord to an individual bishop an obedience which we are not able to pledge ourselves to render to his successors or to other bishops under whom we may find ourselves.

bishop as justifying an important part of our own contention. For the present Bishop of Exeter has said that if any adoration of the Sacrament on the part of individuals should be allowed, no sane man could disallow the corporate adoration involved in Exposition and Benediction. We are concerned rather with the attitude of the Bishop of Oxford, one of the few English bishops who can claim to be regarded as a theologian. Bishop Gore condemns the extra-liturgical cultus of the Blessed Sacrament on the basis of an appeal to Catholic antiquity. Following a statement of Fr. Freestone in his learned work on the subject of Reservation, a statement for which that author gives no adequate evidence, the Bishop makes the modern cultus of the Blessed Sacrament to be the direct consequence of a new doctrine concerning the Eucharist which he supposes to have emerged in the mediaeval period, "the error," as he calls it, "of transubstantiation." He draws a contrast between the Roman Mass up to the eighth century, of which he gives, as it seems to us, a gravely

misleading account—with this we must deal in due sequence—and that of modern times, when, he will have it, as a result of the doctrine of transubstantiation, attention is concentrated on a certain moment, the moment of consecration and elevation, and upon the specific object, the Host. Now we are convinced that Bishop Gore is gravely at fault. We admit, of course, the fact that Benediction and Exposition are modern. We admit that there is a lack of testimony to the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament outside the Liturgy in primitive times. There is as a matter of fact a striking lack of evidence with regard to the devotions generally of Christians outside the synaxis or gathering for public worship. Yet this would not justify the assumption that they prayed little or not at all in private. Conclusions drawn from lack of evidence are precarious. We are on stronger ground when we rest our case as against Bishop Gore on the undoubted fact that the Fathers of the early Church taught that the Blessed Sacrament was Jesus Christ Himself, and, therefore, claimed

the worship of the faithful : that St. Augustine himself declared the neglect of such worship to be a sin, that the primitive liturgies emphasize this worship again and again, while the Fathers enjoin it. The evidence of this which we shall give is sufficient, we believe, to prove all that needs to be proved, namely that the primitive doctrine and practice provide a sufficient basis, an adequate justification, for Exposition and Benediction ; that, in fact, we do find a form of Exposition for worship in the primitive liturgies and something indistinguishable in principle from Benediction.

It is not necessary to our case to justify the later definition of transubstantiation. We do in fact adopt the doctrine of transubstantiation as held by modern Western eucharistic theology, and find in it nothing contrariant to a right philosophy, still less to the principle of the Incarnation.*

We hold with the great theologians of the Middle Ages that while the terminology of the Fathers was often loose, such words as

* Bishop Gore in *Reservation*, p. 32, *vide* Note on p. 45.

“species,” “nature,” * “substance” not having as yet acquired the preciseness of meaning which later attached to them, yet they teach unanimously the doctrine of a *change*, not physical but spiritual, by which bread and wine *become* the Body and Blood of Christ, a doctrine which seems to us best described as *transubstantiatio*, the change, that is, of the *substantia* or underlying reality behind the outward substances (in the modern sense) of bread and wine. In all physical respects (using the word “physical” again in its current modern sense) the bread and wine remain what they were. They lose no single property of their being. Yet by the word of God “this” is no longer bread and wine because it “is” what Christ proclaimed and made it, His Body, His Blood. The doctrine of concomitance, again, was only so formulated in late mediaeval theology, but the Fathers taught the fact, namely, that

* St. Ambrose actually speaks of the word of Christ “changing the natures” (*mutare naturas*) of bread and wine. But the context shows that by “nature” he meant what was later called “substance,” for he writes, “Is not the word of Christ which was able to make out of nothing that which was not, able to change things which are into that which they were not?” (*Lib. de Mysteriis*, c. 9.)

where the Body and Blood of Christ are, there is He Himself, God and Man. It should be remembered, too, that the great teachers of the Middle Ages were soaked in the teaching of the Fathers and constantly appealed to their authority. We may surely assume that they were at least as likely to understand their teaching as the Bishop of Oxford.

But we may pass over the dispute as to the value of the doctrine of transubstantiation as a formula to embody the constant faith of the Church. It is enough for our purpose to prove, as we can prove, that the Church from the earliest days worshipped the Blessed Sacrament and proclaimed the duty of this worship. For Exposition and Benediction rest on this basis and on no other. It is idle to maintain that a worship of the Blessed Sacrament arose out of the definition of transubstantiation and rested upon it as its basis, if it can be proved, as it can be proved, that the Blessed Sacrament was from the first adored as the very Body of Christ, God and Man.

It seems best, in exhibiting this proof, to

summarise the teaching of the Fathers and early liturgies, giving references in footnotes to the passages referred to, and exhibiting some of them more fully in an appendix.

The Fathers of the primitive Church took in their literal sense the words of our Lord at the institution of the Eucharist. They insist, in the words of Magnes of Jerusalem (third century), that the Sacrament "is not a figure of the Body or the Blood, but truly the Body and Blood of Christ." * In the fourth century we find both St. Cyril of Jerusalem and St. James of Saragossa asserting explicitly that what is on the altar after consecration is *not bread and wine* but the Body and Blood of Christ.† In the same century again we find St. Gregory of Nyssa avowing the belief that "the bread sanctified by the word of God is changed into the Body of God the Word," ‡ while St. Ephrem of Syria in the East and St. Ambrose in the West voice the same belief in a change by which bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.§

* *Adv. Theost (Fragments)*. † See Appendix I, p. 85.

‡ *Oral. cat.* xxxvii. : μεταποιεῖσθαι is the word used.

§ See Appendix I.

From the third century or earlier onwards there is a constant stream of witness to this belief. Every Liturgy endorses it. And side by side with this belief in the objective reality of the Body and Blood of Christ, present under the outward forms after consecration, is the conviction that these involve the entire presence of Christ Himself as God and Man. St. Chrysostom speaks of the priest as "handling the common Lord of all." * St. Augustine says that Christ was borne in His own hands when He gave His Body to the disciples.† Salvian, Bishop of Marseilles in the fifth century, writes that while the Jews ate manna "we eat the body of God." ‡ Here again we have a constant stream of testimony to the age-long faith of the Church that the Blessed Sacrament is Christ. This might well be summarized in the words of St. Augustine : " We believe and are sure of —what ? That Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. That is, that Thou art life eternal itself : and Thou givest us in Thy

* *De Sacerdotio*, l. 6.

† *Enarrat. in Ps. xxxiii.*

‡ *Lib. 2. Ad Eccles. Cath. sub nomine Timothei.*

Flesh and Blood only that which Thou art." *

Holding so much, we should expect to find the Fathers going on to proclaim the adorability of Christ in the Sacrament. And we do actually find them doing so again and again. It is St. Dionysius, ascribed in less critical times, and by some not uncritical writers of a later date, to the first century, while no critic places him after the fifth, who invokes the Blessed Sacrament in a prayer beginning, "O most divine and holy Sacrament," while similar epithets are scattered through the writings of the first six centuries. St. Chrysostom, St. Ambrose and St. Augustine alike insist that, in the words of the first, the altar "takes the place of the stable in which Christ was born."† And the parallel thus suggested is found in Christian writers of every century after. When we read in the decrees of Trent that supreme worship is due to this sacrament, and none the less

* *Tract. 27 in Evang. Joann. c. 9.*

† *De Philog. vi. cp. St. Aug. Serm. 190. "In praecepti jacet fidelium cibaria jumentorum."* Cp. also St. Ambrose, "Ad praeceptum accedemus, cibaria manducemus," *Lib. 4 de Sacr. cap. 4.*

because it was ordained to be received, "for we believe the same God to be there present before whom the Magi fell down and worshipped," we meet an argument which is as old as the third century. Thus St. Chrysostom warns Christians of his day not to approach our Lord in the Sacrament as Herod sought to approach him, after proclaiming his purpose "That I may come and worship Him also," but to come with the real intention of honouring and worshipping Him.* And St. Augustine similarly commenting on the 22nd Psalm writes that the rich, that is the proud, "have eaten and worshipped," while it is only the poor, that is the poor in spirit, who shall "eat and be satisfied." The former "worship only; they are not also satisfied, since they imitate Him not. They eat of the Poor Man, yet they disdain to be poor."†

Another passage from St. Augustine constitutes a *locus classicus* on this subject, and calls for special notice. He is commenting on the words of the 99th Psalm in the Latin

* *Hom. 7 in Matt.*

† *Lib. ad Honorat. (Ep. 140).*

version, *Adorate scabellum pedum ejus* (worship His footstool). He asks, how can we worship the earth, which is God's footstool and be guiltless of idolatry? And he gives the answer that flesh is earth and that Christ took flesh of Mary, and this flesh we worship is the Eucharist. "Not only do we not sin," he says, "by worshipping, we sin if we do not worship it." For "no man eats that bread without first worshipping it."* This treatment of the passage in question is much older than St. Augustine. He probably learned it from his teacher, St. Ambrose, in whose writings it occurs.† But it is found alluded to by Origen in the third century as an interpretation which has been put forward by others before him.‡ After St. Augustine it is found in Rusticus § in the sixth century, and in other writers from that time on. It was in fact almost a commonplace of Christian exegesis throughout the primitive period.

Now this passage has an important bearing on two contentions which have been

* *Enarrat. sup., Ps. xcvi.*

† *Lib. 3 de Spirit. Sancto.*

‡ Orig. in *Ps. xcvi.*

§ *Disput. cont. Acephalos.*

made in the course of the Benediction controversy.

First, it has been argued that there was no adoration of the Blessed Sacrament outside the liturgy, purely on the negative ground of lack of evidence to prove such adoration. We may point out that lack of evidence is not a proof that there was no such adoration. There is a singular lack of evidence as to the private devotions of Christians in the early centuries. Yet it would not be reasonable to conclude on this account that they had no private devotions. But we may reasonably ask the question, Is it likely that Christians receiving the Blessed Sacrament in the privacy of their own homes, as we know they did, for example, in Tertullian's time, neglected to pay it the same devotion and adoration which they accorded to it before receiving it in the liturgy? If they did not worship it, they were guilty, according to the express teaching of St. Augustine, of a sin. If they did not so sin, then we may presume an "extra-liturgical cultus" of the Blessed Sacrament. There is no escape from this dilemma.

Secondly, this passage supplies a much needed corrective to the Bishop of Oxford's misleading account of the primitive Eucharist, already alluded to, and his contrast between it and the later Mass which emphasized adoration of the Blessed Sacrament by the elevation at the moment of consecration. For while St. Augustine's words strictly enjoin adoration before all reception of the Blessed Sacrament, there is evidence in plenty that they have a very special reference to the ceremonial adoration which, in the primitive liturgies, immediately preceded communion. Liturgical literature teems with reference to this worship. Priest and deacon adored the Blessed Sacrament before receiving it. When the priest turned to the people and showed them the Sacrament, before their communion, they prostrated themselves to the ground. This showing, or exposition, of the Blessed Sacrament before the communion is emphasized by St. Anastasius of Sinai in the sixth century.* A writer on the cere-

* "The priest after consecrating that bloodless sacrifice lifts up the Bread of Life and shows it to all." *Anast. Sin. Oral. de S. Synaxi.*

monies of the Coptic Liturgy in the eighth century expressly says that the priest is directed to lift up the Blessed Sacrament "as high as he can," and that this is "that the people may be able to see the sacrifice." He describes the congregation as prostrating themselves before it.* Here we have, not merely the principles on which the modern Exposition rests ; we have actually a form of Exposition, the only difference being that it is in the Liturgy, and that the priest takes the place of the monstrance. A passage from St. Chrysostom looks like an allusion to this "exposition."†

But what are we to say, in the light of this testimony, to Bishop Gore's account of the primitive Eucharist, which says nothing about this conspicuous ceremonial, and then proceeds to argue that the elevation and the focussing of attention on the Host was the result of a new mediaeval doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament ? It is easy to exhibit the primitive liturgy as in contrast with the

* *Tract. de Scientia ecclesiastica*, quoted by Boppert, *Scutum Fidei*, iv. 199. Vide Brightman's trans. of *Lit. of Coptic Jacobites*.

† See Appendix I.

mediaeval, if you have first eliminated from your account of the former its principal points of resemblance to the latter! The concentration of attention on the Blessed Sacrament as the principal object of devotion is no new feature of the mediaeval Eucharist. It belongs to the Mass from the first. In the Liturgy of St. James the deacon bids the people, "Bow your heads before the God of mercy, before the altar of propitiation, and before the Body and Blood of our Saviour." * And, in view of the well-known hymn from the Liturgy of St. Basil, "Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and in fear and trembling stand; ponder nothing earthly minded, for, with blessing in His hand, Christ our God to earth descendeth our full homage to demand," † with its dramatic picture of the advent of Christ preceded by angels to take His place at the altar, it can hardly be said that the liturgies of the primitive Church fail to emphasize the consecration. The Bishop of Oxford's account of the early Eucharist is vitally mis-

* Quoted by Boppert, *Scutum Fidei*, v. 93, as occurring in the diakonika. These are not given in full by Brightman.

† Neale and Littledale.

leading. And it utterly vitiates his account of the ceremonial development of eucharistic worship. It may be well to substitute for it a brief but more accurate account.

The development of eucharistic adoration is a genuine development, in rite and ceremony, of what was implicit from the first. The salient feature, first grasped, and always most prominent in Christian thought, is the fact that our Lord gives us in the Blessed Sacrament His very Body and Blood, and with them all that He is. This has involved from the first adoration of the Sacrament. But the first place in which this adoration would be emphasised is in closest proximity to the reception of the gift, as the culminating moment in the eucharistic drama. Hence the exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament immediately before the communion which form so notable a feature of the early Eucharist. During these early centuries the Church is preoccupied as it were with the thought of the Sacrament as the Donum, and with the point at which it is given to the people. But even in these

early times we find Christian thought being led back to consider the point in the service at which the Gift becomes present on the altar. St. Ambrose, with his typically Latin mind, insists more than once on the actual moment of consecration *—thus contradicting Bishop Gore's dating of such insistence from the period following the definition of transubstantiation. But it takes some centuries for this mental process to be translated into ceremonial. Beyond question the ceremonial when it comes is a perfectly consistent expression of what has been believed throughout. The elevation, the ringing of the bell, the torches, and all the later ceremonial, testify to no new faith in the adorability of our Lord there present. They are only fresh devices of inventive devotion to testify to what it has always believed and always, in some way, expressed. There is traceable in the history of eucharistic ceremonial a constant tendency to work backwards from the supreme moment of communion, and gradually enrich the service,

* See Appendix I.

further and further back, with rite and ceremony.

We have seen then that Exposition is justified from the early liturgies and teaching of the Church, and that a form of exposition is found in primitive times. It remains to point to a similar conclusion in regard to Benediction. I have not been able to discover at what date the actual practice of Benediction, in its modern form of making the sign of the cross with the Sacred Host over a communicant or a congregation, is first recorded. It may well be of respectable antiquity. Certainly a form of Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament is to be found as early as the fourth century, being alluded to both by St. James Nisibis and St. Cyril of Jerusalem.* This was the custom on the part of communicants of reverently touching their eyes with the Sacrament before they placed it in their mouths. Either the custom is inexplicable, or it was a form of benediction.† It

* See Appendix I.

† An interesting confirmation of what may be called the benediction-idea is to be found in the Armenian Liturgy (Brightman, p. 449), where the deacon says to the priest, "Sir, bid a blessing," and the priest replies by lifting up the Blessed Sacra-

was hardly needed to supply a basis for Benediction : that basis is almost self-evident to Catholics from their belief about the Blessed Sacrament. But it is at least an interesting confirmation of the naturalness of the instincts of present-day Catholicism. And it seems an added rebuke to the sophistries of modernist eucharistic theology.

*Additional Note on the Blessed Sacrament and
“the principle of the Incarnation.”*

Bishop Gore has said (*Reservation*, p. 32) that the doctrine of transubstantiation “violates the principle of the Incarnation, the principle which in the fifth century was insisted on both as regards our Lord’s Person and as regards the Eucharist ; the principle, that is to say, that the higher and divine nature does not obscure or destroy the human, and that in the Eucharist the Divine Presence does not destroy or

ment “in the sight of the people,” while uttering no words of blessing but an exhortation to “taste in holiness of the holy and precious body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” The invited blessing consists of an exposition. This exposition is followed by the drawing of the curtain which veils the sanctuary during the priest’s communion.

obliterate the material substances of bread and wine." With the implication that the Fathers taught a different doctrine to that embodied in the later doctrine of transubstantiation we have already dealt. We have quoted St. Cyril of Jerusalem and St. James of Saragossa as saying quite definitely that what remains after consecration is "not bread" and "not wine," but the Body and Blood of Christ. While the language of early writers is loosely used, we do not think it is possible, on an unbiassed survey of their teaching, to arrive at any other conclusion than that they taught substantially what the Church teaches to-day on the Real Presence. What we are concerned to rebut here is Dr. Gore's assertion that the doctrine of a single substance remaining in the Blessed Sacrament violates the principle of the Incarnation. It might indeed be maintained that to predicate two substances co-existing in the Sacrament, viz. the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ and the substance of bread and wine, is to "violate the principle of the Incarnation," which insists on only

one Person in Christ, the Divine Person of the Son of God. The Catholic doctrine of a single substance in the Eucharist is strictly analogous to the Catholic doctrine of one Person in Christ, while the reality of the species, insisted on by the Catholic doctrine, gives the required analogy with the two natures in Christ. The fact is that Dr. Gore seems to fall into the common Protestant mistake of investing the word "substantia" with a material meaning ("the material substances") and so to evacuate of their reality the accidents which remain in the Sacrament. He uses arguments against the Catholic doctrine which are only valid against the "phantom" * theory which Catholic theology rejects. In other words, he treats the Tridentine formula of transubstantiation as identical with the doctrine condemned by the 28th Article, a doctrine which "overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament" by denying all reality to the outward species after consecration.

* The proposition, "*Accidentia eucharistica non sunt accidentia realia, sed merae illusiones, et praestigia oculorum,*" was condemned by the Sacred Congregation in 1649.

CHAPTER IV

CANONICAL OBEDIENCE *

As has been already maintained, the question of the canonical obedience due from priests to their bishops is not the main issue in the present controversy. We must insist again that the main issue is the duty of bishops and priests alike to promote the honour of our Blessed Lord, truly present in the Sacrament of the altar and for ever adorable. But while the question of episcopal rights is not the main issue, it is an important side-issue, and something must be said about it.

The Bishop of London, in a pronouncement reported in the *Church Times* of January 3, 1919, claimed to forbid Exposition and Benediction throughout his diocese and demanded the obedience of the clergy in fulfilment of their oath of canonical obedience.

* For much of the substance of this chapter I am indebted to the Rev. J. H. Boudier.

While, as we shall show, this claim cannot stand, we may in a sense be grateful that it should have been made. At any rate it shows that the constant refusal of priests throughout the course of the Catholic Revival to be bound in spiritual matters by the decisions of State authority, or to recognize the validity of courts which, even where consisting of "spiritual persons," have been ultimately based on the civil sanction, has borne some fruit. We refuse to yield to Caesar the things which belong to God. But an authority which bases itself on the appeal to sacred canons is one we can recognize and welcome, provided it can justify its appeal. In the present case we submit, with all respect for a bishop who has earned the affection and gratitude of Catholics, that the oath of canonical obedience does not apply to the matter of this controversy. For canonical obedience means obedience rendered to the bishop in regard to requirements of the Canon Law. To quote a well-known legal definition: "The Oath of Canonical Obedience does not mean that the clergyman will obey

all the commands of the Bishop against which there is no law, but that he will obey all such commands as the Bishop by law is authorised to impose."

Now there is in these provinces no canon law at all which deals with the matters of Exposition and Benediction. If there were a canon forbidding them, the Bishop would be within his rights in claiming the obedience of his priests to this prohibitory enactment. They might justly protest against the requirement, for this reason. There is an enactment of the Canon Law, not only in England but throughout western Christendom, bearing on the kindred matter of reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, which the Bishop himself contravenes. The Canon Law of Western Christendom, promulgated in these provinces, never repealed, and therefore still binding, not only requires the Blessed Sacrament to be reserved in every parish church, but requires it to be so reserved under one kind only. The Bishop of London's regulations require reservation to be in both kinds. Even were the Bishop within his

canonical rights in demanding from his clergy the surrender of Exposition and Benediction, they might reasonably remind him of his own obligation to obey the Canon Law to which he claimed their obedience. But in the present instance we find the Bishop claiming the obedience of his clergy in a matter on which the Canon Law of these provinces is silent, while he himself issues regulations which contravene the Canon Law.*

But the Bishop of London would seem to base his claim on the Canon Law which obtains outside these provinces. For he claims, in the pronouncement referred to, to exercise his authority in these matters similarly to the "Roman Catholic Prelates in this country." We are not disposed to cavil, as some might, at this reference from a bishop of the English Church to papal Canon Law. On the contrary we consider it entirely

* There is a noticeable tendency among our bishops to condemn communion in one kind as wrong in itself, and thus undoubtedly to condemn the primitive Church to which the Church of England has appealed. See Freestone, *The Reserved Sacrament* passim. It may be noted that Paulinus of Milan, writing in the fifth century, describing the death of St. Ambrose, makes it clear that he received his viaticum in one kind from Honoratus. (*Vita S. Ambrosii.*)

desirable that a bishop should be guided by the practice of the rest of the Western Church. And if the Bishop of London would take over the whole Roman system in the matter of the regulation of rites and ceremonies, we should be the last to raise any objection on the ground that he claimed to act similarly to Roman Catholic bishops. But we have some right to complain when he claims the rights of Roman Catholic bishops in order to suppress what Roman Catholic bishops are bound to promote, when he claims to exercise these rights in a manner in which no Roman Catholic bishop ever exercises them. For no Roman Catholic prelate forbids Exposition or Benediction throughout his diocese, as the Bishop of London has done. It is true that, under the Roman system, the bishop regulates such matters as Exposition and Benediction, and that he has the power to forbid them. "But," to quote Van Hove, "in all these matters his power is not unlimited ; he must conform to the enactments of the Canon Law." The enactments of the Canon Law referred to have one single object,

viz. the promotion of the honour of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. If a Roman Catholic bishop refuses permission for Benediction in any individual case, it is because there is danger of irreverence to the Blessed Sacrament involved in granting it. The power of prohibition is used only to guard the Blessed Sacrament from dishonour. Is it unfair to say that with us the real object of prohibition has been to prevent the Blessed Sacrament from receiving too much adoration? At any rate the Bishop of London has not and cannot urge as a ground for prohibition of these ceremonies at St. Michael's, North Kensington, or St. Saviour's, Hoxton, that they have involved any risk of dishonour to our Lord. If nobody had been concerned to check the worship of the Blessed Sacrament, there would have been no objection raised and no episcopal prohibition put forth. We are brought back to the main issue. The real ground of the prohibition is the unhappy disbelief of many English Christians, bishops included, in the Real Presence and adorability of our Lord in the most holy Sacrament.

This being so, it is idle to exploit the Roman system, which admittedly promotes the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, for the sinister purpose of restricting such adoration.

It may, perhaps, be maintained that we have made an unfair use of the Bishop's reference to Roman Catholic prelates, and that the language of a busy and overworked dignitary who is no theologian should be more generously interpreted. Let us then adopt a more generous interpretation, forbearing to press the implications of the phrase, "canonical obedience," and avoiding any inferences from the reference to Roman Catholic bishops which might seem unfair. Let us suppose the Bishop of London simply to claim that the regulation of worship is by all Catholic precedent a matter in which the bishop is concerned; that obedience to the bishop in such matters is a Catholic tradition. Such a claim, stated in this form, is incontestable. Under normal conditions in the Catholic Church the priest should practically do nothing without the bishop's sanction. This is a far-reaching principle,

and applies to many more things than Exposition and Benediction. But the conditions which obtain in the English Church are not normal. Normally the bishop administers the law of the Church for the promotion of the purposes of the Church. On this account it could hardly ever be right for a priest to disobey his bishop. He would presume that the bishop was serving the purposes for which the Church exists, and would bow to the judgment and decision of his superior. But the whole course of the Catholic Revival has testified to our abnormal conditions. Its leadership has not been episcopal, but frankly presbyterian. The bishops have constantly been the mouth-pieces and instruments of the Protestantism which has sought at every stage to crush or to check the growing forces of the movement: at the dictates of this Protestantism they have persecuted and even imprisoned the faithful priests who, on their own initiative, proclaimed forgotten truths and expressed them in Catholic practices. Resistance to episcopal demands, an inversion of the

normal Catholic principle, became a tradition of the Catholic movement.* And to this resistance we owe such liberty as we have to-day to teach the Catholic faith and worship in the Catholic way. The resistance was justified by the abnormal conditions. The bishops, set to defend and promote Catholic faith and practice, were seeking to destroy both at the bidding of Protestant prejudice and fanaticism. It became necessary to insist that this faith and practice were more important than the authority which after all existed for their sake. In other words, the principle emerged that the authority of a bishop could only be obeyed with safety when it rested on some higher authority than the bishop's own claim, and was directed towards the promotion of the ends for which it existed.

We claim that this principle still holds good. Many of our bishops, appointed by statesmen for other reasons than their zeal

* Not that Catholics refuse to obey the lawful commands of their bishops. This they recognize that they are bound to do. But so many demands have been made which were not in accordance with any Church law that of necessity they have been challenged.

for the Catholic faith, are notoriously contemptuous of the Catholic tradition of faith and practice. Bishops who, like Dr. Ingram, have learned to venerate this tradition, are subject to the pressure of hostile opinion in the very conclaves of the bishops. Were the Bishop of London surrounded by bishops who would receive with approval, instead of with a stony and hostile silence, his brave words defending access to the Blessed Sacrament, an access which he had for some years endeavoured to check, we believe he would be willing enough to sanction Exposition and Benediction. We are not without hope that he will yet arrive at sanctioning them, when he finds that Catholics will not do without them. In truth, it is not the Bishop of London whom the Catholic clergy in London resist to-day in the matter of Benediction, and have resisted hitherto in the matter of access, but the Protestantism of which he feels the pressure and which has driven him to the uneasy putting forth of prohibitions unsupported by any strong convictions of his own. The priests who refused obedience to

his prohibitions of the ceremonial use of incense, and later of reservation in the open church, have lived to find their actions allowed and his ban removed. Their resistance has been justified. And resistance in this matter may claim a like justification and achieve a like result. Let priests only continue to honour and adore our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and to hold Him up for the adoration of the faithful at whatever cost in grants and the bishop's favour forfeited, and it will be found that their action has led to the further promotion of that honour which the Church exists to pay ; that they have been missionaries of the Blessed Sacrament, not only to the people and priests of England, but to the bishops themselves. In the providence of God priests have been set to accomplish the work of the Catholic revival in England. Over and over again they have found themselves in the painful position of resisting their Fathers in God. They have chosen to "obey God rather than man." They have suffered for their obedience to an authority which is above bishops, an authority to

which the bishops rather than they were disobedient. They have been reviled and persecuted. But they have been the makers of history and the saviours of Israel. It is for us to follow in their footsteps, fearless of consequences.

Additional Note on the authority of the parish priest in relation to the reserved Sacrament.

The *Church Times* has recently challenged the authority of the parish priest to give Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament on his own initiative. It is of course conceded that in the Roman Church a priest requires the permission of the bishop for solemn Benediction except at Corpus Christi. But this right of the bishop rests on positive enactments of modern Canon Law, and not on ancient custom. The English Canon Law has no enactments of the kind: the only prescription being the Ornaments Rubric, which by implication requires that the monstrance be retained and be in use. The following passage from Freestone justifies the conclusion that extra-liturgical Exposition and Benediction

were originated by presbyters and only later regulated by bishops.

“The circumstances that made the presbyter the celebrant at Mass in the bishop’s stead made him the custodian and normal minister of the reserved Eucharist. These were, briefly, the subdivision of the city areas for disciplinary and administrative purposes ; the spread of Christianity from the towns to the countryside ; and, later, the development, from churches attached to isolated districts and estates, of the regular parochial system of the Middle Ages. All these causes conspired to produce and to conserve presbyteral autonomy in matters connected with the sacraments. We may take note that, long before this development had come to its full growth, the control of *viaticum* had been placed by some bishops in the hands of the presbyterate, even as early as the fourth century.” (*The Sacrament Reserved*, chap. xv. p. 220.)

CHAPTER V

THE HONOUR OF JESUS

THERE are two objects, and two alone, for which the Church exists. For these objects bishops rule and priests labour. To these ends the whole machinery of the Church, her sacraments, her worship, her sacred synods, and all her varied activities are directed. These objects are the glory of God and the salvation of souls. And, for the Christian, the honour of Jesus Christ is bound up with the glory of God. For He is not only the supreme revelation of God, the sole means of access to God ; He is Himself Very God of Very God, blessed for all eternity. No question, whether of organization or of worship, can be rightly considered apart from its bearing on the honour of Jesus and the salvation of the souls for which He died. We have, therefore, every right to demand, as we do demand, that the question of the toleration of

Exposition and Benediction be considered and decided by our rulers solely on the merits of this test. Do they promote the honour of Jesus ? Do they conduce to the salvation of souls ? And to these two questions we must finally address ourselves.

But before we do so, we are compelled by the circumstances of the time, circumstances full of distress to all true believers in Jesus Christ, to raise an issue which has an important bearing upon the present controversy. We are under the painful necessity of alluding to the ready toleration in the English Church, and by the authorities of the English Church, of errors grievously dishonouring to our Lord, disastrously inimical to the welfare of souls. While priests are being condemned unheard, mulcted of grants, accused of disloyalty, threatened with prosecution, for lifting up our Lord in the Sacrament of His compelling love, and for calling the faithful round the altar to render Him homage and receive His blessing, for the increase of their devotion, the lifting up of their hearts and the setting of their wills heavenward,

other priests are setting forth strange doctrines which call in question the miracles recorded in the sacred scriptures and endorsed by the Son of God, and are preaching theories which gravely compromise the doctrine of the Incarnation as proclaimed by centuries of Christian teaching. And this without incurring in most cases more than the mildest of rebukes from authority. It is hardly necessary to give instances of this. The facts are notorious. The scandal of the elevation to the episcopate of Dr. Henson, who has steadily refused to give any clear assurance of his belief in the virgin-birth of our Lord, is little more than a year old. It is true that some bishops protested at the time ; that some of them refused to take part in his consecration. But he sits at the conclaves of bishops and takes his part in their discussions, apparently without a voice there being heard to object. When the matter of Exposition and Benediction is raised among them, will any of the bishops suggest that a prelate whose orthodoxy is suspect in a matter where the honour of our Lord and His

Virgin Mother are vitally concerned may not decently take any part in such discussions? We do not think so. Modernism, even extreme modernism, in the matter of the faith is indulgently regarded. Opinions which verge on the denial of the Godhead of our Lord will have no penalties meted out to them, will involve no measure of ostracism from the fellowship and comity of Christian bishops. Their reception is in striking contrast with that accorded to modern, yet far less modern, ceremonial developments based on the ancient faith and designed for its safe-guarding. The authority which frowns on Father Kilburn may be trusted to smile on Bishop Henson.

It may be urged that this matter has nothing to do with the questions at issue in the present controversy: that regrettable laxity in one direction should not be made a plea for laxity in another; that the failure of authority to suppress doctrinal error should not be pleaded against an attempt on their part to put down unauthorized ceremonies. To this we reply that we are not pleading at

all for laxity in regard to ceremonies in view of the notorious laxity in regard to fundamental doctrine, justified as we are in contrasting the sternness with which the relatively unimportant matters of ceremonial are treated with the indulgence shown in the unquestionably more important matter of doctrine. We have raised this issue for quite other reasons, as having, we are convinced, a really important bearing on the Benediction controversy.

For we are claiming that these practices should be judged solely as they affect the honour of our Lord and the good of souls. And the treatment of modernism shows that these supreme objects are not the guiding principles of the policy of our bishops. If they were, we do not hesitate to say that the bishops who really do value historic Christianity would have gone to any lengths rather than tolerate, as in the eyes of the world they have tolerated, teachings which were dishonouring to our Lord and subversive of that faith by which alone men may hope for salvation. If they would not apply the

supreme test in such weighty matters, how shall they be trusted to apply it in the comparatively minor matters of these devotions? And we refuse to accept decisions based on any other test.

It is worth while to ask what is the reason of the weakness of our authorities in the face of dangerous speculations and modernist denials undermining the faith? Why are they so ready, for instance, to mutilate or degrade the Athanasian symbol, to expurgate the psalter, to prune the Prayer Book offices of references to Old Testament miracle? Is it not because of the quite noticeable tendency among us to conciliate objectors rather than to convert them, to respect men's errors rather than to press on them the faith by which salvation comes to their souls? The bishops are anxious to remove offences from the Christianity of which they are the official guardians and trustees, rather than risk offending the intellectualist or alienating the worldly. They seek to throw overboard what is objected to, so far as they can without alienating the faithful, and even at this risk.

And this is the real secret of the attempt to put down Exposition and Benediction. These practices, with their unmistakable testimony to the supernatural Presence which is enshrined at the heart of Christendom, make the world uncomfortable. This explicit and triumphant assertion of an unquestioning faith makes the intellectualist uneasy. Exposition and Benediction, like Bible miracles and the Athanasian Creed, are objected to. Therefore they must be "made to cease," that we may have peace in the Establishment. Ceremonies which mean nothing may be tolerated. For who is going to object to them? the humble faithful will only avoid them. Peace at any price, peace between the believer in the old religion and the apostles of the new, peace between Christ and Belial—this is the object which really dominates the policy of our authorities. And we will have none of it. We are at grips with a matter which is one of life and death to us. For we preach the religion of Christ, a religion which we know to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to many. Yet we can

do no other than preach it, and press into its service every weapon. We should have been allowed to wear any garments we liked in Church, had we been content to evacuate them of all doctrinal significance: we might have as much ceremonial as we pleased, provided it did nothing to testify to our supernatural faith. But everything which we do becomes objectionable to the world in proportion as it involves the proclamation to it of the supernatural.

It is material to ask here what has occasioned the rapid growth of devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, issuing in these practices introduced in His honour? We believe there is a two-fold explanation. The war, as has already been said, had much to do with it. With the ordered world we had known reeling in the confusion of a struggle unexampled in history, faith fell back on the supernatural realities to sustain it. Anxious for those dearest to them, anxious for the future, the faithful gathered round the tabernacles and found in the presence of Jesus a consolation and a power to steady which

they could find nowhere else. Grateful and adoring devotion led them further. They enthroned Him in the monstrance, stripped of all veils save those of the sacramental species: they bowed to His Benediction. Unbelief may feel uneasy. But who that believes will dare to say they were wrong? And if they were right then to follow the instincts of Christian faith and piety, can it be right to forbid them now? May not those prayers before the tabernacle, that worship of Jesus in Exposition and Benediction, have done something to gain us a victory which depended in large measure on the faith and the "nerve" of those at home, as well as on the power of their intercession for those in the field? We have won the war. But the future holds fresh dangers and anxieties for us. Is it wise—we need hardly ask is it grateful to our Lord—to cease from the devotions in which we found His help?

But the war was not the only trouble which drove the faithful to renewed devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. They had yet another cause, almost a graver cause, for trouble and

anxiety. After all, the world could never give a peace to satisfy them. That peace they sought in the faith, and in the Author of faith. But they found all that they held most sacred called in question by a critical and contemptuous modernism, which seemed more and more to invade the sanctuary where they had looked for peace. They found Jesus Christ Himself, as it seemed to them, dishonoured by denial and disbelief. An instinct of reparation drove them to find fresh ways of honouring Him. Can they be expected to cease from this honour because of prohibitions coming from the very source which has shown so little energy in protecting His honour?

Driven by the stress of the most terrible war in history, and by the consciousness that upon the very Church at home had come a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy, men fled to the feet of Jesus, and found reassurance and help for their own souls in Exposition and Benediction. Were their instincts those of a misguided piety? Or were they a true wisdom? We maintain

that they were the latter ; that they honoured Jesus and promoted the salvation of souls. We insist that they must not be condemned unheard.

We who stand by these practices sincerely desire the honour of our Lord, the salvation of souls. And we demand of bishops who forbid them that they should convince us first that Exposition and Benediction militate against one or other of the two ends which they, as well as ourselves, are bound to promote.

To those who believe the Sacrament to be the bare sign of an absent thing, doubtless these rites are sheer idolatry, dishonouring to our Lord and soul-destroying. But we refuse to measure their value with the measure of unbelief. We cannot do other than contend for the truth of the Blessed Sacrament against all who deny or deprave it. We can only listen to objections raised by those who believe, as the whole Church teaches, that the Blessed Sacrament is our Lord. Can any of them maintain that the honour which avowedly we seek to pay is mistaken ; that

it really dishonours Him, that the help for our souls we thought we found is a delusion ; that these practices endanger spirituality ?

Dr. Gore has maintained a position something like this, and has made it the ground of prohibiting even access to the reserved Sacrament for devotion. In this he condemns not only the thousands of his fellow bishops, including some of the Anglican communion, who encourage Exposition and Benediction, but also the Bishop of London, who allows the piety of access to the Blessed Sacrament for devotion. All such devotions, he would tell us, are a misuse of a presence given for communion, not for adoration. We honour Christ more by restricting our use of the Sacrament to the purpose for which He ordained it. They focus our attention on a presence external to us : we shall better cultivate spirituality by insistence on the presence of Christ within us. But the Bishop of Oxford's arguments, which are bound up with what is practically a new eucharistic theology, do not convince us ; the older theology satisfies us, and it answers to our

satisfaction the objections alleged. Our Lord did not ordain the Blessed Sacrament for adoration. True, in a sense. In the same sense it is true that He did not come to earth to be worshipped. He did not ascend to heaven to be worshipped. Yet when He came on earth it was said of Him, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." And when He was born the wise men fell down and worshipped Him. In heaven saints and angels worship the Lamb. In the Blessed Sacrament, as in heaven, "the Lamb slain" must be the object of loving homage for those who believe in the eucharistic mystery. Such worship follows from the essential truth about our Lord, that He is Very God. Could it be shown that devotions to the Blessed Sacrament have become, or were in danger of becoming, a substitute for communion, there might be room for a warning against their misuse. But the very churches where they obtain are those in which the most frequent communion is inculcated and practised. Again, neither when our Lord was on earth manifesting there His external presence

did spirituality suffer, nor in heaven do the saints fail of the closest interior union with Christ, because they worship His external presence. The fact is that this antithesis between an external and an interior presence is bad theology and bad philosophy. A presence in a sanctuary and a presence in the heart are not in the same category, and cannot really be set one against the other. Devotions such as Exposition and Benediction are not untried novelties. They have been tested by experience. The verdict of Christian experience, confirmed by saints, is that they deepen spirituality. And this is the experience of those who use them to-day.

In truth it is not possible to deny that these devotions honour our Lord and help souls, save on the basis of Protestant unbelief, or an individualist theology of the Eucharist. The instincts of faith and piety have justified themselves against the denials of unbelief, the sophistries of a critical intellectualism. The Blessed Sacrament is Jesus, and Jesus is God. When we come before Him to fall down and worship, we honour Him and reap

for our souls the benefit which He delights to bestow upon adoring love.

The Bishop of London has recognized the piety which will not be refused access to the Blessed Sacrament, and has defended it before Convocation. In the name of Christian piety we appeal to him, and to such other bishops as share his standpoint, to judge this matter solely with a view to the honour of our Lord and the salvation of souls. If they will do this, we are not afraid of the result. They will not prohibit these practices. Regulate them they may, with a due regard to reverence for the Blessed Sacrament. And such regulation will be loyally accepted. Where there is no danger of dishonour to the sacred Presence, they will not be content to permit. They will actively encourage. And they will thus inspire with fresh confidence the hearts saddened by the prevalent heresies and denials. They will be taking their rightful place as leaders in the movement which will yet save the English Church. And they will be followed as no other leaders have been followed.

To other bishops we are content to make our appeal in the words of Gamaliel. "Refrain from these men, and let them alone ; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught : but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

CHAPTER VI

BENEDICTION AND THE BISHOPS OF TRURO AND BIRMINGHAM

SINCE the foregoing pages were written, two documents of some importance have been published in the public press,* which supply abundant confirmation of the justice of the contentions here advanced, namely that the main issue is not that of the claim of the bishops to a spiritual authority but that of the adorability of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

The first of these is the account of the opening of proceedings by the Bishop of Truro against the Vicar of Cury under the Church Discipline Act of 1840. Here the exercise of spiritual authority is frankly abandoned. The Bishop sets in motion a procedure which, to quote from a protest made at the opening Commission, "begins under an Act of Parliament and ends with

* *Church Times*, of March 14, 1919.

a judgment pronounced by the Privy Council," a secular court. And the grounds of objection to Benediction are clearly stated. We may pass over the charge that Benediction was "a ceremony that formed no part of the rites and ceremonies in the Book of Common Prayer." For this is true of many other rites which bishops allow, and in which they take part. They are not objected to, precisely because they do not involve any Catholic doctrine. But the really significant part of the charge against Benediction in the Truro diocese is that it is "directly opposed to the Articles of faith and religion" set forth in the Prayer Book. In other words, the appeal is to the 28th Article, interpreted in a Protestant sense which would make it forbid not only Exposition and Benediction, but also reservation, which the bishops are prepared to allow, and even the elevation at Mass. The Protestant conception of the Blessed Sacrament and the Protestant belief in the right of Parliament to judge spiritual matters are clearly behind the proceedings initiated at Truro.

The other document is the memorial addressed to the Bishop of Birmingham by six priests in his diocese, together with the bishop's reply. The memorialists announce that they are prepared, "though with great reluctance and distress of heart and mind," to obey the bishop's prohibition of Benediction, since they feel that in this matter they are bound by their oath of canonical obedience. They express a hope that this service will yet be permitted, and they testify to its value to souls. It stimulates love for our Lord, tends to increase the frequency and devotion of communions, and proves an invaluable antidote to modernism. This is a position with which we must sympathize, although we cannot agree with its view of the obligations of the oath of canonical obedience, for reasons already set out. The Bishop's reply is really illuminating. He thanks the memorialists for their letter and loyal submission. He commends the "true Churchmanship" shown in "the acceptance of a loving request from authority when it involves the surrender of a position which we

believe to be one beneficial to the full expression of the truth." He confesses that under present circumstances in the Church of England he "can see no possible working policy except that where conscience will allow there shall be deference to the desire of the diocesan." There is no word here of anything like the exercise of canonical authority. The clergy are represented as acceding to "a loving request from authority" as showing "deference to the desire of the diocesan." And this in a matter which involves "the surrender of a position" avowedly adopted for "the full expression of the truth." What this truth is, and whether he regards it as truth, the Bishop carefully abstains from saying. Yet surely he is bound to say, if he would claim a reasoning and conscientious obedience. The truth involved is the adorability of the Blessed Sacrament. Does the Bishop condemn this truth? If so, he should certainly say so, that the clergy may know that they are fighting for the truth rather than for any particular expression of it. Does he tolerate

the truth, while condemning this expression of it, as bishops tolerate modernist teachings? If so, those who hold that bishops are as much bound as priests to promote the adoration of our Lord in the Sacrament must surely hesitate to accept even a "loving request" based on an attitude which regards such promotion as an indifferent matter. Does he share their desire to promote the worship of the Blessed Sacrament, while prohibiting this one form of such devotion? If so, he is bound to confess his faith, the more when, in another diocese, a priest is being proceeded against on avowedly Protestant grounds. But we venture to state confidently that the Bishop of Birmingham will not make public confession of that faith in the Blessed Sacrament which the memorialists have sought to express. His avowed object in securing the surrender is "the peace of the Body of Christ." In plain words, Benediction is objected to; therefore it must go. It is objected to precisely because it is a full expression of the truth of the Eucharist. The bishop's letter, by itself,

would certainly seem to put the memorialists in the invidious position of making peace at the expense of the full expression of the truth, of showing deference to the desire of their diocesan at the expense of the honour of his Lord and theirs.

Let us waive, for the moment, the question of the Bishop's attitude towards the promotion of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Let us suppose that his orthodox faith and Catholic piety may fairly be presumed. We have then only to deal with the prohibition throughout his diocese of a devotion which other bishops of undoubted faith and piety not only permit but actively promote, and which no Catholic bishop outside the Anglican communion thus forbids. Surely such a prohibition calls for some explanation. The reply to the signatories, the one public expression from the bishop, gives no explanation. We understand that the ground the bishop has alleged in private is that Benediction is "not allowed by the Church of England." But, in view of the fact that the bishop does not prohibit other services not

“allowed by the Church of England,” this does not carry us very far. The Bishop of Birmingham should certainly be pressed to say publicly why he finds Benediction alone of extra-liturgical services intolerable. The day is surely past when the arbitrary “desire of the diocesan” can be accepted as a sufficient basis for prohibitions or commands, even if one could presume that such prohibitions and commands were not aiming at the suppression of Christian devotion.

APPENDIX I

Passages from early Christian writers attesting the belief that the Sacrament is Christ and adorable, and witnessing to some kind of Exposition for worship and Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament.

Liturgy of St. Sixtus. Prayer of the priest before communion (? second century).

“ I bear Thee, Lord, in my hands, and hold Thee in my fingers (*pugillo complector*), Lord of the ages, whom creatures contain not, and I place Thee, Almighty, in my mouth.” (Murator. De Lit. T.I., p. 167.)

St. James of Saragossa (fourth century).

“ From that instant in which Christ took bread and proclaimed it His Body, it was not bread but His Body : and they ate it and marvelled the while.” (Serm. 66 De Pass. Dom.)

And again, of the faith of the Apostles he writes : " The bread which He brake and proclaimed His Body they recognized as His Body, and believed so to be." (*id.*)

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (fourth century).

" Having learned and been assured of this, that that which seemeth bread is not bread, though to be perceived as such by the taste, but the Body of Christ ; and that which seemeth wine is not wine, though the taste would have it so, but the Blood of Christ . . . stablish thine heart." (Catech. 4 mystagog. de corp. et sang. Dom. 9.)

St. Ephrem of Syria (fourth century).

" Deem not that the bread and wine thou seest remain here the same : nay, brother, believe not this. By the prayers of the priest, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, bread becomes the Body, wine the Blood [of Christ]." (Serm. i De sanctissimis et vivificantibus sacr.)

St. Ambrose (fourth century).

“That bread is bread before the words of the sacraments. When consecration has taken place, from bread it becomes the Body of Christ.” (*Panis iste est panis ante verba sacramentorum. Vbi accesserit consecratio, de pane fit corpus Christi.*)

“ . . . How can that which is bread be the Body of Christ ? By consecration. And by what words is consecration effected, and by whose utterances ? Those of the Lord Jesus. . . . The priest uses not his own utterances, but he uses the utterances of Christ. Therefore the utterance of Christ makes this sacrament.” (L. 4 de Sacram. c. 4.)

“ Before it is consecrated, it is bread ; but when the words of Christ have come, it is the Body of Christ. . . . And before the words of Christ, the cup is full of wine and water ; but when the words of Christ have been performed, there is made the Blood of Christ, who redeemed His people. See then in what sort the utterance of Christ is able to change all things.” (*id.* c. 5.)

Theodoret (fifth century).

Q. After the hallowing how callest thou them ?

A. The Body of Christ, and the Blood of Christ.

Q. And dost thou believe that thou receivest the Body of Christ and the Blood ?

A. So I believe.

“ . . . and they are seen and touched as what they were before ; but are apprehended to be what they have become and are believed to be, and are worshipped as being what they are believed to be.” (In 2 dialog. *Orthod. inter et Eranist.*)

St. Caesarius of Arles (sixth century).

“ The invisible Priest changes the visible creatures into the substance of His Body and Blood by the secret force of His word, thus saying, Take and eat, This is My Body, etc.” (*Hom. 5 de Pasch.*)

St. Chrysostom (fifth century).

“ For this mystery makes earth heaven for thee. Open then the gates of heaven and

look within ; nay, not of heaven, but of the heaven of heavens ; and then shalt thou see that which hath been said. For that which is most precious of all things there, that will I show thee set upon the earth. For as in the king's palace that which is more honourable than all else is not the walls, nor the golden roof, but the body of the king that is set upon the throne, so also is the Body of the King in the heavens. But this it is granted thee now to behold on earth. For it is not angels, nor archangels, nor heavens and the heaven of heavens, but the Lord of these Himself that I show thee (σοι δείκνυμι). Knowest thou how thou lookest (ὀρᾷς) on earth on Him Who is of more worth than all beside ? and lookest not on Him only, but also touchest ? and touchest not only, but also eatest and departest homeward having taken Him." (Hom. in 1 Cor. c. x.)

The emphasis placed in this passage on "gazing upon" the Blessed Sacrament is remarkable.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (fourth century).

“With care having hallowed thine eyes by the touch of the holy Body, receive it.”
(Catech. 5.)

St. James Nisibis (fourth century), comparing Christians to faithful dogs, writes :

“They lick His wounds, when they receive His Body, and place it over their eyes.”
(Serm. 7 De Poenit.)

APPENDIX II

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CANON LAW ON EXPOSITION AND BENEDICTION

CODEx JURIS CANONICI. Can. 1274.

In ecclesiis aut oratoriis quibus datum est asservare sanctissimam Eucharistiam, fieri potest expositio privata seu cum pyxide ex qualibet justa causa sine Ordinarii licentia ; expositio vero publica seu cum ostensorio die festo Corporis Christi et intra octavam fieri potest in omnibus ecclesiis inter Missarum sollemnia et ad Vesperas ; aliis vero temporibus nonnisi ex justa et gravi causa praesertim publica et de Ordinarii loci licentia, licet ecclesia ad religionem exemptam pertineat.

RITUS SERVANDUS.

. . . Episcopis Angliae, quorum est rebus ad Eucharistiam cultum pertinentibus invigilare et providere.

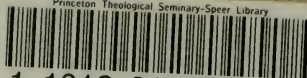
Tandem sedulo adnotandum, non licere cuilibet sacerdoti Benedictionem SSi Sacramenti pro lubitu, ne quidem ob gravem causam, populo impertiri; sed hoc omnino ab Episcopi nutu pendere, penes quem erit definire quoties hunc sacrum ritum peragere liceat. Si ergo Rector Ecclesiae aliquando, extra consueta tempora, voluerit Benedictionem vel Expositionem adhibere, ad Episcopum, seu Vicarium generalem, sibi recurrendum esse noverit.

I. SYNOD OF WESTMINSTER. Decree xviii.

Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament cannot be given without leave of the Bishop. Much less Processions, those excepted which are prescribed by the Rubrics. Nor can Solemn Exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament be allowed without permission from the Bishop. That is, when the Monstrance is used. For the less solemn Benediction with the Pyx alone does not need the Bishop's permission.



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